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The Nature of Objectivity

Philosophy

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THE NATURE OF OBJECTIVITY

BY

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THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

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May 16 1913

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Queen Lois Shepherd.

ENTITLED The Nature of Objectivity.

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Doctor of Philosophy.

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INTRODUCTORY.

Seeing and what is seen are, in the opinion of the common-sense man, distinguishable facts of experience. It is true that this distinction which he draws between experiencing and that which is experienced is not attended by any clearly conceived point of difference. The questions: What is experiencing or consciousness, and what is What you are conscious of, as apart from your consciousness, of it, when pressed upon him in any given situation, throw him into confusion. Nevertheless, the truth of the distinction is to him indubitable.

It is our purpose to accept the common-sense man's conviction that consciousness and object-of-consciousness are things that we can and do know and proceed to find out what the nature of each may be. What we shall have to say at the end of our investigation will no doubt be somewhat startling to the common-sense man. And this is to be expected, for we shall not attempt to give an account of something that is already familiar to him, but rather to connect up with certain other facts the duality, consciousness-object, which he is ascribing to experience. In a word, we shall attempt to interpret this duality for him.

What we are chiefly interested in is the character of the what-is-seen, or what-is-in-any-other-way-experienced. But since we are taking the seeing as not only correlated with the what-is-seen, but as correlated with it in experience, it is necessary for us to determine also what the seeing is, in order that we may distinguish the what-is-seen from the seeing.

But what justification is there for laboring upon the formulation of the concept of objectivity? The common-sense man will tell us that he gets along very well with consciousness and object undefined. And why, if perform that labor we will, do we take the common-sense man's vague notion of objectivity as our starting point? In the following pages we shall attempt to answer these questions. But even now we should like to make reply, if only in a summary way. Upon the nature of objectivity rests the question of truth and the question of the validity of values of every kind - questions which the common-sense man and philosopher alike are unable to escape. And our answer to the second question is that if we did not take as out starting point the common-sense man's notion of object - namely something that is found in experience - we should not have a starting point.

And now let us return to the common-sense man. Although he is able to tell you neither what "consciousness" is nor what "object" is, it is easy to discover that it is with reference to a specific event that he makes these distinctions. He defends his assertion that he sees, hears, or otherwise experiences in a given situation, by showing that his eyes are "looking right at the object", or that his ear is turned in the direction of the sound. To show that his body is adjusted in a specific way and that he is able to act appropriately is all that he feels called upon to do to make good his assertion.

How a functioning physical organism becomes connected with things, for him, in the way of being the experiencing of things, can be traced out roughly. "In" and "out of experience" is a distinction that comes gradually. In the beginning of the child's

life it is out of sight, out of mind. When the rattle drops out of his view it is not followed up as something that is though not seen. Not until associations are formed does the notion of the "out-of-experience" arise. Then the voice of the nurse arouses anticipations of the sight of her, and the sight of her anticipations of the nursing bottle, etc.

A functioning physical body becomes singled out as the prime factor in the event in which things come "into experience" as a result of certain anticipated experiences failing to be realized. For example, it is found that the delightful experience of grasping the bottle or the rattle cannot be had unless the hand can be extended to the bottle or the rattle. And in another way also the body comes to be recognized as playing a leading part in experience. It is found that things vary for us from time to time in shape, in size, in color, in agreeableness, etc., and that there is a concomitant variation in the condition or position of our bodies.

Out of this discovery that the physical body and its environment are on occasions most closely related grows, we believe, the common-sense man's distinction between "consciousness" and "object-of-consciousness". "Seeing" is for him the name for a certain form of bodily behavior, and a thing is a "seen object" by virtue of being that to which the body, by behaving in the way of "seeing", becomes adjusted.

That the common-sense man does not always mean by "consciousness" and "object-of-consciousness" adjusting body and environing things, respectively, must be granted. He reflects in his usage of these terms a variety of philosophical doctrines that have been bequeathed to him. What we are meaning to assert is that over and

above the many conceptions of consciousness and object which he has inherited, so to speak, he uses a conception which he himself has formulated and which has reference to the connection between things and a functioning physical organism.

In proposing to determine the nature of the duality, consciousness-object, which the common-sense man ascribes to experience, we would have it understood, then, that we do not intend to attempt to cross-section experience and study its structure. For we believe that experience is an event and that it must be dealt with accordingly. Which is to say that whatever distinctions are made in experience must be made in retrospect and as between the factors in an event.

In a word, our problem is to determine the relation into which the environment and the physical body enter when experience occurs. We believe that the common-sense man takes the event as being much less complicated than it really is. And we should bring this same charge against the philosopher. Indeed, if anything that is, is wonderful, the manner in which the body and the environment become joined in the event of experience may well fill us with awe. The wonder is that we have been content to watch that union without asking any questions about it, or if we did ask questions, that we have been satisfied with the single statement: Experience is dependent upon a physical body.

THE BEARING OF INTROSPECTION ON OBJECTIVITY.

In taking the stand, which we have in the preceding pages, that the make-up of experience can be given only in retrospect, never immediately, we are opposing a great army of "experience" experts. We refer to those psychologists who hold that by means of introspection the nature of a given experience can be told even at the moment of the experience and that what a given experience was can, by the same method, be told without referring to what that experience became.

This, unless we have misunderstood Professor Titchener, is the doctrine implicit in a series of articles which he presented last year on the question of introspection.[1] "I assume, therefore", to quote from one of those articles - "that in introspection we are describing a conscious process at first hand, or describing at first hand the representative memory of a past process, or describing from memory the way in which we 'placed' some past process at the time of its occurrence."[2] In asserting that a "conscious process" cannot be given "at first hand" are we guilty of dismissing an empirical fact "by a wave of the epistemological wand?"[3]

[1] Amer. Jour. of Psych. Vol. XXIII.

[2] Ibid. p.494.

[3] Professor Titchener says as regards another matter: "It is, however, worth noting as a sign of the immaturity of psychology and its imperfect separation from philosophy, that the empirical difference of free and controlled consciousness is dismissed, in certain modern dystems, by a wave of the epistemological wand". Ibid. p.494.

Our reply is that our position represents not so much the waving of the 'epistemological wand' as it does a refusal to wave the "epistemological wand". Introspection, as Professor Titchener takes it, we are inclined to think, rests upon certain epistemological assumptions which we - and to all outward appearances Professor Titchener himself - are not willing to grant. These assumptions we shall attempt to bring to light.

Introspection, Professor Titchener would have us understand, is a method of observation which differs from observations made by physicists, chemists, and other scientists merely in its "attitude and point of view". It is observation from the "standpoint of descriptive psychology". Its function is that of all scientific observation, namely, to reconstruct. The kind of reconstruction which it accomplishes is what we are most interested in determining. As bearing upon this question the contrast which he draws between taking experience at its face value and introspecting upon experience is significant. In the latter case we "tease out the existential factors in the consciousness to be described."[1]

Another passage which bears upon this point runs as follows: "A half-trained observer, when he attempts to introspect upon a given experience, often reports simply that he feels puzzled or perplexed; but this reply, Professor Titchener tells us, is not an introspective report, because it does not give the particular 'feels' that constitute perplexity for that particular individual;

[1] Ibid. p.490.

the observer has given an introspective report when the reader of the report is able, from the report "to reconstitute, to reconstruct, the perplexity which is therein described, precisely as it was lived."[1]

The reconstruction, then, is a matter of getting at the "existential factors" of experience. A question might be raised as to what is meant by "existential factors". The bodily conditions of an experience are in one sense "existential factors" of experience. But this is not the meaning which Professor Titchener gives to the term. The "existential factors" which the observer should "tease out" of the experience of bewilderment, spoken of above, are, he tells us: "localized organic and kinaesthetic processes, affective concomitants, verbal ideas, etc." This list makes clear that the factors to be "teased out" are psychological rather than physiological in character.

A further characteristic of introspection which we should notice is that though it reconstructs it does not change that with which it works; it gives us experience "at first hand". Presumably this means that it gives us experience as it really is. There is but one kind of change which Professor Titchener can conceive of introspection's working upon experience. To introspect one must take a specific attitude toward experience. Now this attitude might in some manner reflect itself in the experience that is being observed. But this possibility he believes need not

[1] Ibid, p.168.

alarm us, for when a habit of introspection is formed, if anything is added by attitude it will settle down to a common supplement, i.e., it will become a "constant error", and hence will be negligible. Indeed, there is every reason to believe, he holds, that the attitude if it gets into experience at all, must inevitably, when introspection has been performed again and again, drop out entirely. This is what happens in the case of other processes again and again repeated; we finally carry them on without attending to the fact that we are carrying them on.

So much Professor Titchener tells us, with amplifications which we have neither space nor time to present, concerning the method and results of introspection. And what are our objections? We can sum them up in one statement: the "viewpoint" of this kind of observation is that our so-completely-unified experience is only an appearance of a more real multiple-part complex. This doctrine is implied in the discussion at every turn.

How else than from this point of view can it be asserted that verbal ideas, effective concomitants, kinaesthetic processes are the existential factors in the half-trained observer's experience of bewilderment. It would be folly to say that the bewilderment as he experienced it was all of these factors. For the half-trained observer, at least,-we shall not be so bold as to say how it is with the well-trained observer - these so-called factors are not in experience until after the experience of bewilderment. If they were really inexperience before also, then surely experience is not what it seems to be. And if it is not granted that the observer fails to get these many factors when he feels the bewilderment, then it is unmeaning to call introspection reconstruction.

But if introspection is a process of reconstruction and for all that gives experience "at first hand", what must be the aim of introspection, and what must be the nature of experience. Only on the condition that there is the sham of appearance to be removed from experience before its real nature can be ascertained, can we understand how introspection can be said to work a change without working a change.

That there is a more real form of experience underlying experience as we experience it, is made most prominent at one point in Professor Titchener's account of retrospection. The observer has given an introspective report on the experience of bewilderment, he tells us, to return to that case again, when the reader of the report is able to reconstruct the perplexity described in the report "precisely as that perplexity was lived." Now Professor Titchener cannot mean that in order to be an introspective report the account given of perplexity by the observer must be such as to cause the reader to feel perplexed; or, if the observer were reporting on an experience of fear, that the reader must be made to feel afraid. It would be nonsensical to claim that the delineation of "kinaesthetic processes, affective concomitants, verbal ideas, etc., " could bring about the kind of re-living of the experience of perplexity which we have just indicated. But if we suppose that the experience of perplexity is really kinaesthetic processes, affective concomitants, etc., then to re-live the experience of the observer from his introspective report of his experience is another story.

The corallary of the doctrine that experience is mere ap-

pearance is a synthesizing mind that works upon the data of real experience. If experience is really complex, though it does not seem to be so, a mind is most obviously needed to account for the fact that experience appears as it does. Whether we are willing to involve ourselves with all of the problems which that kind of a mind brings with it, need not be asked. That neither Professor Titchener nor those who agree with him that by introspection experience can be given "at first hand" would be willing to declare allegiance to "mind" so conceived, we are safe in asserting. How, then, have they been so misled as to have arrived at the point where they are forced to accept "mind".

The source of the trouble is, we believe, their total disregard of the fact that experience is continuous, that any given moment of experience is of one piece with the moment before and the moment after it. Professor Titchener professes to stand with those who assert the "going on of thought". However, his discussion of "durativeness", that attribute of the constituents of "consciousness" which confers upon them their status of "processes", indicates most conclusively that he is far from recognizing the full significance of the 'going on of thought'. We shall quote at some length from that discussion in order that his position may be clearly understood.

"The experimental psychologist, if I understand him, means by process something more than the abstract form of occurrence in time; so that when we say, e.g., that perception is a process, and speak on the other hand of the process of growth, or process of decay, we are using the word in different meanings. A process, in the psychological sense, is an item of experience to the nature of

which durativeness (if the word may be pardoned) is integral and essential. It is true in the large, that all experience is temporal.. Yet there are numberless cases in which the progress of experience is so slow that its process-character may be ignored; we then speak of 'things'. And there are other cases in which the progress is too fast for direct temporal apprehension; we then speak of 'events'. Now it is characteristic of consciousness that its constituents are typically processes. We may find analogies in such experiences as a thunder storm, a luncheon, an address; here is plenty of content, - heat and rain, thunder and lightning; things to eat, and things to drink, speeches and table decorations; topics discussed, introduction and peroration; but it is of the essence of the experience that it occupies a certain limited time; and its description implies constant reference to this durative attribute. So it is with consciousness. Process is a relative term; and there are times when a conscious complex is relatively so stable that we are justified in applying to it the older term 'state of consciousness' or the more modern 'conscious formation'; just as there are times when the stream of thought is so rapid that we speak of conscious 'events' or 'occurrences' Nevertheless, Wundt and James are absolutely in the right when they emphasize the 'going on' of thought or idea; our descriptions of consciousness if they are to be satisfactory must be through and through temporal; our vocabulary must be rich in words that indicate the passage and course of time."[1]

[1] Ibid, p.494.

In ascribing to experience 'durativeness' rather than the "abstract form of occurrence in time", Professor Titchener has destroyed the 'going on' of thought. Consider the character of 'durativeness'. It is not time in which things develop, grow old, and decay; these processes are peculiar to the abstract form of occurrence in time. The constituents of experience are affected by 'durativeness' only in the way of being given movement - sometimes rapid movement, and sometimes movement so slow that we are justified in speaking of 'states of consciousness'. Durativeness does not produce in the constituents a change of character.

It becomes evident, then, that the 'going on' of thought cannot be a 'going on' that is known. If the constituents of experience do not develop, do not change in such a way as to reveal the fact that they cover time, how can they be known as processes? The beginning of a process, no matter how short the span of the process, is gone before the end of the process has arrived. Therefore, if the constituents do not, from point to point in their movements, change in the way of showing what they have been in contrast to what they now are, that they are processes can be known only by an on-looking, non-temporal mind, which grasps both the past and the present of the constituents.

But on this point we need not so greatly disturb ourselves for it turns out that Professor Titchener does not intend to connote by the term "durativeness" that which is transitional in char-

[1] "The abstract of occurrence in time" is, according to Professor Titchener, a logical device, i.e., it is gotten by inference rather than by experience.

acter. For if he meant by "durativeness" the carrying over of one moment of experience into the next moment, he could not say that the one way in which description from introspection might falsify the "consciousness" upon which it works, is by allowing the attitude of the introspector to creep in, If he really stood for transition he could not fail to see that there is another and more serious problem in giving "at first hand" the description of any given experience, namely, the difficulty of giving the "all" of experience at any moment when experience is at no moment complete. That he should at no point in his discussion give mention of this problem leads us to think that the attribute durativeness" is really temporal only in name, which is to say that, despite his declared intentions to do otherwise, Professor Titchener is taking experience as made up of static constituents.

He objects to ascribing to experience the kind of time that involves growth, decay, etc., on the ground that we do not experience change but only changing contents. We insist that it is just this kind of time that should be ascribed to experience and for this reason; while it may be that we do not experience change, we experience not only changing contents but also changed contents. The contents, if we may use that term as the name for what is experienced, reveal a history. They reveal what they have been as well as what they now are. Things we recognized, remembered, But how could this be if there were not transition from experience to experience, but instead "durativeness"?

However, if the becomingness of experience is left out of account there is no problem about breaking experience up into distinct experiences and further breaking those experiences up into pro-

cesses which are not processes, or, if one's vocabulary is not rich in terms 'that indicate the passage and course of time,' of breaking each moment of experience into 'focus' and 'fringe', and then again dissecting the 'fringe'. But we have seen where this road leads and not wishing to follow it to its end, we propose to attempt to draw distinction in experience only in the way of finding what functions are operative when the body and the environment join in the event of experience.

THE NATURE OF OBJECTIVITY.

The event of experience as viewed from the side of the body is a distinctive kind of behavior. It is behavior which is not purely mechanical, i.e., it is not pure reflex or pure habit. What distinguishes intelligent behavior is its lack of fixity and its reference to ends.

If we remove the cerebral hemispheres from a frog what do we discover? He is able to perform all of the actions which a frog with the hemispheres is capable of. But in order to react in a specific way he requires a specific kind of stimulus. Given that stimulus, we know in advance how he will react. But when a frog with the hemispheres is stimulated it cannot be foretold how he will behave; he displays a flexibility, a variableness, in his behavior that is foreign to the other frog.

And the flexibility of behavior thus displayed when consciousness is present is controlled, is directed toward ends. In contrast to pure habit where at each step there is a different stimulus, and accordingly behavior is a mere succession of adjustments, conscious behavior is a continuous process of adjustment, i.e., at each point it is in transition to a new adjustment. Let us suppose an apple is placed in front of a child. His seeing it, grasping it, raising it to his mouth and biting it, are not separate and distinct acts of adjustment. The seen apple is incipiently being grasped, and the grasped apple is being bitten before it has reached the child's mouth. All of this is but a way of saying that when "consciousness" is present it is a uniquely changing environment to which the body is keeping itself adjusted. Whereas

when "consciousness" is absent the body's successive reactions are to an environment which does not possess this peculiar character of flux.

The conscious situation, then, is characterized by a peculiar kind of change. The nature of this change may be described more or less metaphorically by saying that it mirrors the future as it goes. And this we assert because of the undeniable fact of felt identity. One moment of experience claims a preceding moment. We are proposing that this felt identity be taken as a fulfilment, as the culmination of a process, as a future, already foretold, become realized.

The prophetic function of that which is experienced comes to light most clearly in the problematic situation. There is a period of doubt and uncertainty, ending with the removal of the uncertainty by the gaining of that which is sought. The end is known before it is acquired, is prophesied before it is reached. And the end thus known before it is known, controls the whole process. The search for a forgotten name is a case in point. Many names present themselves but only one is chosen. And when the right name does present itself it is welcomed as that for which we were looking all the time.

Now the kind of change which things undergo when they furnish us a problem which we struggle with and finally solve, knowing the answer in a manner before it arrives - this kind of change we are taking as typical of the change which things undergo in all cases of experience. To take experience as having this phophetic character makes possible the explanation of certain occurrences

which otherwise remain mysteries. That objects should be recognized as things which have previously been known, need not be taken as a mystery or as a case of experience transcending itself. The standing apart of what is doubtful from what is the datum, the undoubted, gives the duality of the object within experience, its absent past and its present. And the coming of what was doubtful into what it promised to be - suppose it is a book upon my table whose ownership I am in doubt about and look on the fly-leaf for my name which I find - this is recognition, an act of claiming the present as belonging to the past without transcending experience in so doing.

And now we are ready to raise the question: Into what kind of relationship do the body and the environment enter in the event of experience? If our analysis is correct, the environment takes on the function of guiding the body. In ever being on the wing and constantly displaying a goal, the experienced environment controls the body, controls it in the way of guiding it, in as much as it not only calls out from the body specific acts of adjustment but also makes each adjustment the beginning of another act of adjustment; the seen apple is an apple that is on the way to being grasped. But it must be born in mind that the terms "guiding" and "control- are figurative. What we are trying to make clear is that in the event of experience body and environment vary concomitantly. The environment is as much in a state of unstable equilibrium as is the body. When the body acts in a specific way, the environment is a specific kind of stimulus, and, vice versa, when the environment is a specific kind of stim-

ulus the body acts in a specific way; and just as the body at the very moment that it has become adjusted is on the way to a readjustment, so also the environment at the very moment that it is a specific kind of stimulus is on the way to becoming a different kind of stimulus.

This contention of ours that experience has the character of flux is not a new doctrine. Whether in terms of "feelings of relations", or an "act of apprehension", or a "diaphanous consciousness", we find recognition of the fact that experience in some of its make-up, at least, is elusive, non-describable, on the wing. But our position differs from others in this respect: that which is on the wing is not additive to the things experienced, the latter being static in character. The becomingness permeates the things experienced. It is the things themselves that are changing. By virtue of being on the way to becoming what they are on the way to becoming they are what they are in all of their uniqueness.

What we are asserting is, to state it boldly, that the environment, when experiences, has a fringe. It has a fringe in the sense that it has certain uses which at any given moment are wholly unknown. This is to say that what any given situation is leading to in the way of further adjustment between body and environment is not revealed by the given situation. Not until it has performed its function, i.e., has led the body to a further purchase upon its environment, can we determine what the given situation, or experience was. But as performing the function that it is performing at any given moment a given experience is just what it is. It is for this reason that any neighbor's and my experiences are different, and no two experiences of mine the same. The direction in which any given

experience tends to lead depends upon past associations, habits, and education, which are for no two of us the same, nor for anyone of us twice the same.

The fringe of which we are speaking is, then, radically different from the fringe of which the psychologist speaks. It is a fringe that cannot be described"at first hand". To place the feelings which a given experience leads to in the given experience, as the psychologist does, is to strip experience of its continuity, and to make a mystery of the continuity of the bodily behavior which is correlated with experience. But the fringe which we are ascribing to experience explains these two facts; that the things experienced form a continuum, and that the body acts in a manner that adapts it to a changing environment.

And this brings us in sight of that for which we are making our search. "Consciousness" is the fringe, the flux character of the experienced environment, the environment's function of leading the body from one situation to another. The common-sense man's identification of consciousness with the functioning of the physical body alone is untenable; for the character of the activity of the body, in the event of experience, is intelligible only when the unceasing flux of the things experienced is brought into account.

What "object" is, if consciousness involves both body and environing things, it remains for us to determine. Its connotation is in one sense, narrower than the common-sense man takes it to be; for him "object" is the experienced environment in its entire character. But it is not with the entire nature of the experienced environment but rather with the experienced environment in abstraction from one of its characteristics that objectivity is to be

identified. "Object", in other words, is a given experience taken in abstraction from its transitional character. But a given experience even as thus taken involves a functioning physical body, which is to say that "object" has also a somewhat broader connotation than the common-sense man givesit; for in identifying "object" with the experienced environment he takes the latter as having its character without relation to the physical body.

The character that the environment has over and above that of functioning in the way of making transition from situation to situation is not difficult to state, for it is the character that is most familiar to us, the character which we do not need to turn philospher in order to discover. It is the character which the environment has as being that to which the body has become adjusted. For though the body is constantly becoming adjusted in the event of experience, it is also at each moment adjusted. The body is adjusted in the sense that it is controlled by a specific end or aim of the environment. And all of this is but a way of saying that "object" is the environment functioning in the way of holding up ends for the behavior of the body.

The experienced environment has a focus as well as a fringe, which fact gives us the basis for the distinction between consciousness and object-of-consciousness. Its focus makes of it not an environment of selected parts but rather a total situation. At this moment, for example, the "problem of objectivity", the weariness of a warm day, the harassing practice of a bugler in a neighboring house, are, not one, but all, an end for my activity - the end, namely, of completing this thesis. With reference to that end

fighting my weariness, and "attending from"the bugle represent adjustment, the presence of a focus in experience as truly as my "thoughts" on the problem of objectivity. For focus is another name for the uniting of the various factorsof the environment in a plan of action. In other words, the object designates the point of departure at any given moment for the reconstructive process which characterizes the conscious situation.

Consciousness and object are, then, the fringe and the focus, respectively. They are correlated functions of the environment. The environment in being "in consciousness" performs the function of leading the body from one situation to another; the environment is"object"in holding up specific ends for bodily behavior, i.e., in presenting itself as the "raw material" for this peculiar form of reconstruction. It is the overlooking of the two-fold function of the experienced environment that has given rise, we believe, to the persistent problems of philosophy. Experience has been treated as wholly "object", its transitional character being left out of account, with the result that "consciousness" has in turn been denied, or treated as something additive, or again, as identical with the sum-total of experience.

THE DOCTRINE OF INDEPENDENCE.

The conception of consciousness and object which we have attempted to formulate in the preceding pages is in complete agreement in certain respects with the doctrine of neo-realism. We join with the advocates of that doctrine in asserting that "mind" falls wholly within the realm of natural things. We also hold in common with the realist that what is "in mind" is neither created nor monopolized by coming "into mind". In other words, we both hold that what we experience antedates our experiencing it, and that what is experienced by any one of us is not hindered thereby from being experienced by others also.

These points of agreement make prominent the fact that we take radical issue with realism on the question of the independence of objects. Objectivity, as we have defined it, involves a functioning physical organism. It is the name for an adjustment of environment and body. Objectivity, as the realist views it, has no necessary connection with a physical body. As Professor Perry states the theory of independence it is: "Things may be and are directly experienced without owing either their being or their nature to that circumstance."[1] Just where do we part company with the realist? By what diverging of paths does he arrive at "thorough-going realism", to use Professor Perry's appraisal of the doctrine of independent objects, and we at thorough-going relativity?

[1] Present Philosophical Tendencies. p.315. The section in which this occurs is headed "Independence of experience or consciousness" and by consciousness he tells us that he means selective response of the physical organism.

The independence of objects is revealed by introspection, according to some of our opponents. The sensations of yellow, for example, according to the account of one of this number, contains over and above "yellow" the element, "sensation", which is contained also in the "sensation of blue" and in the "sensation of green". This element, "sensation, which is common to all experience is "awareness" or "consciousness" and a most unique element it is, as the following account makes evident: "The moment we try to fix our attention upon consciousness and to see what, distinctly, it is, it seems to vanish; it seems as if we had before us a mere emptiness. - - - When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue; the other element is as it were diaphanous. Yet it can be distinguished if we look attentively enough, and if we know that there is something to look for."[1]

That the discovery of the element, "awareness", makes indubitable the independence of objects seems obvious enough to this class of realists. The reasoning which they imply is that, that which is as diaphanous, colorless, "the same-for-all", as awareness is found to be, leaves the objects to which it becomes attached precisely what they would be if it were not attached to them.

Why we cannot accept independence on these grounds, it is not difficult to make clear. In the first place, any attempt to argue from the findings of introspection is obviously futile. If ones opponents declares that he does not find the given element in

[1]G.E.Moore: Refutation of Idealism. Mind N.S. XII. p.450.

his experience - and this is the declaration which many who have looked for awareness have made - all argument is at an end. And, further, even if it is granted that awareness and objects are distinguishable, it does not follow that they are independent of each other. Shape and color are also distinguishable, but it does not follow that at times they exist apart.

There is another realistic program, however, which we cannot so readily cast aside. Its procedure is so much like our own that it requires the most careful scrutiny to determine at what point our courses begin to run in contrary directions. We refer to Professor Perry's treatment of independence. He is opposed to studying "mind" by the introspective method. He proposes rather to view it "as it operates in the open field of nature and of history."[1] "Listening and hearing", for example, "are operations of the living organism, or specific operations of the nervous system which lie in the field of general observation."[2] And this he tells us by the way of making it clear that he stands for "a motor theory of consciousness." The action of the body is neither antecedent nor subsequent to mind, but is instead, simultaneous with mind, or, better, the activity of the body is a part of the very make-up of mind - this is his contention. Not by having an element, "awareness", added to them, but simply by being "reacted to" in a specific manner characteristic of the central nervous system," elements become "mental contents."[3]

Mind, as thus viewed "in the open field of nature and history", he finds to be made up of these three components: "action,

[1] Present Philosophical Tendencies, p.279.
[2] Ibid, p.299.
[3] Ibid, p.285.

interest, and contents", i.e., body reacting, interests of the body controlling the body's reaction, and environment reacted to." But what is the nature of the "interest" and what is the nature of the "contents"? We fully agree with Professor Perry that "hearing is an operation of the living organism", but we should like to know something about the character of what is heard and what its relation is to the "operation of the living organism".

In answer to our question concerning the nature of mental contents, we find the following passage: "It is with respect to their grouping and interrelations that the elements of mental content exhibit any peculiarity. When my attention is directed to this I find that mental contents, as compared, for example, with physical nature, possess a characteristic fragmentariness. Not all of physical nature, nor of any given natural body, is in my mind, but the peculiar abstract that is in my mind does not exactly coincide with the particular abstract that is in my neighbor's mind. Furthermore, the fragments of nature that find their way into my mind acquire thereby a peculiar interrelation and compose a peculiar pattern."[1]

From our point of view this is an excellent account of "mind" as given from the viewpoint of things experienced. Mental contents do indeed possess a "characteristic fragmentariness". We need only compare any two or a few of our experiences to discover this fact. Such a comparison serves to show us that the environment is always a specific kind of stimulus to the body but it is not permanently

[1] Ibid, p.277.

any one kind of stimulus. As an illlustration of this, the surface of my table is smooth and compact, when viewed by my naked eye, but when I see it under the microscope it is rough and broken up into innumerable parts. The surface of the table as I get it with the naked eye is fragmentary, for it is only one of the kinds of stimuli that the surface of my table is; and vice versa, the appearance of the surface of the table under the microscope is fragmentary for it is only the detailed character of the surface of the table, whereas the surface of the table present itself to my body under another character also. And again, the experience in which the two experiences of the table are compared is fragmentary, for it shows only the duplex character of the surface of the table, whereas we know it is each of these characters singly, as well.

And we should also agree that the "fragments of nature" which find their way into my mind "acquire a peculiar interrelation and pattern", as compared with those that find their way into my neighbor's mind; for the fragments in my mind are connected up and permeated by my aims and purposes, those in my beighbor's mind by aims and purposes peculiar to him. A rock that I, an idle tramper, find along the roadside becomes, for me, a resting place, and then, as I while away the moments, a thing upon which to scratch initials, date, etc. But for a geologist who passes the same way, the rock is a piece of limestone which becomes, through an investigation which it directs, "interrelated" with the cliffs at the foot of which it rests.

It will be observed that in adopting Professor Perry's account we are taking the "mental contents" as in a state of flux, as growing, as becoming, as continually setting new problems for the body. "Grouping" and "pattern" we understand as the names for a

temporal continuum which the things experienced form. In a word, we understand the "peculiarity" of mental states to be that they perform the function of guiding the body. We are placing "interest" in the mental contents. The body acts "teleologically", "is governed by its interest", in the sense that the contents "select" from the body adjustments that make for further adjustments.

But does Professor Perry mean by "grouping" and "pattern" the continuum of things that are changing teleologically? There is much to indicate that he does not. He tells us that he uses "interest" in a biological rather than in psychological sense. The three components of mind, he finally reduces to two, combining "activity" and "interest" in the term "activity", the latter having reference to the functioning of the physical body. And this seems to indicate that the "contents" are wholly passive, and that the body is that part of "mind" which has the distinction of acting. And again his insistence that "what such an aggregate (i.e. things experienced) derives from consciousness is its aggregation and no more,"[1] seems to indicate that the aggregation is additive rather than being the very woof and web of the "aggregate". And, finally, the fact that he finds that the very nature of "mind" argues the independence of objects is proof positive that he does not mean by "grouping" the coöperative functioning of body and environment. The latter kind of grouping does not lead us to independence.

What then, is his grouping, the grouping that leads to independence? And is that kind of grouping tenable? There is a form

[1] Ibid, p.323.

of grouping which things have in relation to the physical body, that can be observed by anyone who will take the time to watch the behavior of a physical body. From my window I see a man walking down the street. He reacts now to one section of the walk and now to another. In this way I see his body selecting out parts of a larger environment. Now at times as we read Professor Perry's account we are inclined to think that it is this kind of grouping with which he proposes to identify consciousness. And if consciousness is merely a matter of a body's reacting to specific parts of its environment, then the independence of objects may be gotten, just as he says, from observing what actually transpires. But independence in that sense, does not need to be argued for; there is no point in telling one that environment and body reacting to environment are distinguishable.

"Consciousness is a selective response to a pre-existing and independently existing environment."[1] But see what it would mean to take this statement at its face value. The body responds to a multitude of things which are not experienced. Yes, it even responds under the direction of its interests, i.e., its biological interests, without that to which it responds being experienced. Reflex action and so-called conscious action are not differentiated in this conception of consciousness.

Or does Professor Perry mean that the "pattern" is in the environment? Does the bodily response merely given us a clue to the "pattern" which the environment takes on when it is experienced?

[1] Ibid , p.322.

Should the following passage be interpreted in that way: "A subjective manifold will be any manifold whose inclusion and arrangement of contents can be attributed to the order and range of some particular organism's response. The number of the planets, for example, and their realtive distances from the sun, cannot be so accounted for; but the number of planets which I have seen, the temporal order in which I have seen them, and their apparent distances, can be so accounted for"?

When he cites "perspective or point of view" as the clearest instance of the subjective manifold we are the more convinced that the "pattern" is in the environment. Let us, then, take perspective under our consideration and see if we can discover just what the "pattern" which constitutes consciousness is, and how it makes evident independent objects.

When I look down the avenue, houses, trees, etc., spread out from my body in one manner, and when I walk its length they group themselves in another manner, and when I view the avenue from my window they group themselves in still another manner. Now by comparing these varying experiences of the avenue, I come to know that things have a perspective, that they group themselves in different ways relative to the different positions which my body, in reacting to them, holds. But each of these "manifolds" I can "attribute to the order and range of some particular organism's response." Therefore, they are all "subjective manifolds". Then it is not by contrasting a "subjective" with an "objective manifold" that we are to learn the character of the "subjective" but rather by looking at the "subjective" alone.

Now what is there in the character of such "manifolds" to

indicate that they are projections abstracted from the plenum of nature", "nature" being understood as independent of experience? Since we cannot answer this question we suspect that we have not discovered the principle of the grouping which constitutes consciousness. If the manifold which constitutes consciousness argues independence then we should agree with Professor McGlivary[1] that "the spiritual and temporal centers of experience are not merely spatial and temporal centers; they are spatial and temporal centers of a relational complex which has a distinctive character given to it by the fact that it is a conscious relational complex."[1]

But if we are to accept the doctrine of independence, the "distinctive character" of the conscious relational complex must be made clear to us. Professor Perry acknowledges that the advocates of a relational consciousness have failed to show what the principle of the relation or grouping is. His own work is an attempt to overcome that short coming of his school. But has he succeeded in the task he has undertaken? He tells us that we can find the distinctive character of the group of consciousness by watching the behavior of the body. But this method, as we have tried to show, does not bring to light any thing distinctive as regards consciousness. When we study the environment we also fail to find the grouping that "abstracts from the plenum of nature." In conclusion, then, we are not yet convinced of the independence of objects.

We started out to find where the realist's program and our own diverge. We are inclined to think that the turning of the roads is the passivity of the environment. For the realist the physical body alone selects; while we are contending that the en-

[1] Philosophical Review. Vol.XXI, p.164.

vironment also selects, that it chooses specific co-ordinations from the range of the body's ways of acting. When the body selects it becomes hopelessly involved and controlled by what it selects, according to our view. We take it as literally true that the body cannot see an object without also undertaking to grasp it.

But suppose we take the environment as passive. Would we suspect, even for a moment, that it was independent? If a converging avenue did not carry itself over to an avenue of long straight lines, as our weary bodies travel its length, we do not know how the identity of the avenue, in this shift of contexts, would be maintained. And if the avenue having been converging and having become strai ht, did not further become, when we stretch ourselves in the philosopher's arm-chair, an avenue which proclaims its two contexts, we do not know how the realist, could tell us that things, visually perceived, have a perspective, and how we could answer the realist, as we do, "yea, verily". If the environment is passive without thereby hindering us from knowing its independence, then there must be in the make-up of mind something besides "activity" and "contents". The "innocent bystander" incarnate, alone, makes tenable the doctrine of independence. Which then shall we choose, - thorough-going realism, or thorough-going relativity?

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